CHURCHES IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

OUNDLE CHURCH.

As some of the churches in Northamptonshire are of great beauty, and deserve to be more visited than they are, a few notes will not be uninteresting, and may be the means of making the buildings better known.

Wannington Church is considered by Rickman to be one of the most valuable churches in the county, and few persons will be disposed to dispute the assertion. With the exception of the chancel, which has been barbarously used, it is a perfect specimen of an Early English church, with a tower and spire of great beauty: the interior is very fine, presenting rather a peculiar appearance from the roof being of dark oak, forming a strong contrast with the light colour of the walls. The whole of the detail is of the most valuable description, particularly in the doors and windows, of which there are a great variety. Until very lately the whole of the interior was covered with whitewash, but owing to the exertions of the present vicar a portion of it has been removed, and much beautiful detail disclosed.

A pleasant stroll across the fields will lead from Wannington to Fotheringay (a distance of two miles). This church is better known than most of its neighbours, from a publication by the Oxford Architectural Society. It is a very good specimen of a perpendicular church; and is, with the whole of the grounds about it, kept in good order.

At about the same distance from Wannington, in an opposite direction, is Polebrook Church, another valuable specimen. The tower and spire have something the same outline as at Wannington, but are very inferior in every respect; it has, however, the advantage in its chancel, which is a very fine specimen of Early English. The north transept has a good arcade, and the other parts of the church have some curious portions well worthy of notice, including one or two early windows with transoms.

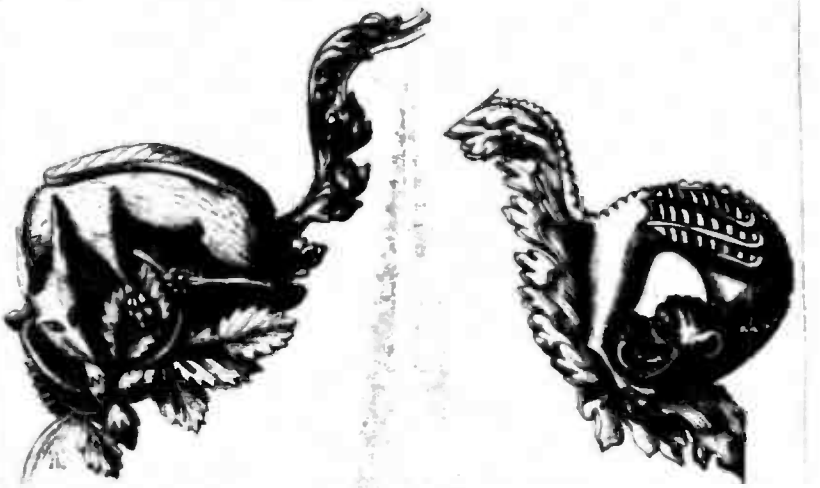
About a mile from this place is Oundle. The spire of this church is very lofty, and may be seen for some miles round the country. The tower, spire, and south porch, are the principal features worth notice, and these are best seen from the point chosen for the accompanying view: the rest of the church is not equal to these portions. There are a few decorated windows of rather curious design, but by no means worthy of imitation.

The interior is disfigured in the usual way, by much whitewash, high pews, and heavy galleries.

In the same neighbourhood are three or four other churches. Tansor is remarkable for the beauty of its situation; it has also a good Norman door. Cotterstock, Lutton, and Elton, are each worth a visit; and to the list may be added Thrapston and Lowick. In fact, there is much to interest an architect in this county, and it may be seen very cheaply and very quickly. One way is to get into Northamptonshire by the London and Birmingham Railway, making for Peterborough, and returning by the Eastern Counties, not forgetting to visit Ely and Cambridge.

* A local correspondent some time since sent us the following note on Fotheringay Church. This place, though now only a village, was formerly a market-town; and is connected with the unfortunate career of Mary, Queen of Scots:—"Edmund of Langley, the original projector of the College at Fotheringay, began his intentions by erecting a 'large and magnificent choir' at the east end of the old parish church; and, after his death, his son Edward, Duke of York, wishing to rebuild the nave of the old church, appointed trustees to carry his intentions into execution. The death of the Duke of York at Agincourt put a stop to further proceedings, but the present church is a monument of the care with which the trust was afterwards fulfilled. The plan was carried into execution by his nephew Richard, Duke of York, in the thirteenth year of Henry VI., 1435. The church stands boldly on an eminence. A tower of two storys rises above the west end of the nave. The lower story is square, and finished with plain parapet, ornamented at the angles with octagon embattled turrets: upon these were placed statues, two of which only now remain. There are two windows—one large, the other small—divided by plain tracery, on each side of the tower: the upper story is octagonal, embattled, and has buttresses at the angles, with crocketed pinnacles; on each side is a lofty window, which fills one compartment. The clerestory is strengthened by lying buttresses, the buttresses of the aisle are finished with a pinnacle, and between each is a window filled with handsome tracery. The aisles and clerestory are embattled. On the west front is a spacious entrance, under an arch, within a square moulding; the spandrils have an escutcheon in the centre of a quatre-foil. Above this is a large window, finished with tracery. On each side are two bold and lofty buttresses. The entrance most in use is under a large porch, of plain architecture, on the north side of the church. In the interior, beneath the tower, is a beautiful groined ceiling, which is thrown open to the nave by a lofty arch; beneath this is the font; it is octagonal, adorned with foliage and grotesque heads, within Gothic compartments, supported on a short pillar of similar architecture, and elevated upon two steps. On the west side of it is a stone pedestal, designed for the station of the priest. Baptisteries are seldom found so commodiously arranged as it is in, to give the congregation a complete view of the ceremony. The nave is flanked by four arches, of light and elegant construction. The area of the church is fitted up with neat pews, and the pulpit is original and in good preservation. Many stones in the pavement contained brasses, but they have long since been erased. The length of the church is 8[illegible] feet; width, 68 feet; height of nave and groined ceiling, 41 feet; tower from floor to the roof of the octagon, 103 feet 4 inches; aisles, 27 feet to the top of the battlement; the west door, 16 feet 3 inches in width; and the great western window, 20 feet.—W. B."

CARVED ARM-RESTS, FROM WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL.



MUSEUM OF ARCHITECTURAL MODELS.

MR. EDITOR,—It is strange that there is not in this country, so celebrated for its public and private buildings, a collective series of models, so placed as to bring them into prominent view. In order to effect this, I have paid some attention to the subject, and have matured a plan which, in my humble opinion, will answer the end proposed. It is this, to establish a museum of architectural models, to consist of—

The models of cathedral, collegiate, conventual, and parochial churches, whether perfect or in a ruinous condition.

The models of all the public and some private buildings.

These models to be of three separate scales—one scale for the exteriors; another, large one, for the interiors; also a larger, for some integral portion, as may be desirable to shew the peculiar characteristics of each building.

In all cases where desirable, a model to be made, of a scale correspondent, to shew the effect to be produced by the completion of the edifice, according to the original design, which may have been frustrated by fortuitous circumstances.

The scales to be fixed, and, when decided on, not to be deviated from on any account whatever. Thus the comparative sizes will be better understood, and by this means more satisfactory ideas can be obtained.

An expense of three or four hundred pounds per annum for ten years would effect wonders. Expenses might be materially lessened by allowing parties in actual possession of the buildings, of which models would have to be made, such as deans, masters, principals, &c., to have a duplicate model, at a price fixed upon.

Should this plan be followed out, in a few years we should be able to boast of a collection of models such as no other country could produce.—I am, &c.

HENRY WALKER BENSON.

North Shields, January 17.

*** The establishment of the much-desired Museum of Architecture, long ago urged by us, and at one moment supposed to be almost in view, seems no nearer realization than it ever has been.

ARM-RESTS FROM WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL.

DURING the middle ages, the golden period for introducing into architectural accessories simple imitations of nature was the century in which flourished the "Decorated" style. Under its influence the oak, the ivy, the hazel, and other habitants of our woods were grouped round the bells of columns, or carved as if growing from the wood-work of interior decorations, with a freedom of touch which, even in imitative art, displayed perfect originality of treatment. But of all the carved works of this period which have been handed down to us, few possess so many interesting features as the far-famed stalls of Winchester Cathedral, which are profusely and elaborately enriched in every part, from their lofty canopies to the arm-rests, and again down to the subsellæ. These are a complete epitome of ecclesiastical botany, and we believe some of the plants here introduced are to be found in no cotemporary works; animals and grotesques, inseparable from medieval sculptures, and explained by the learned author of the "Mores Catholici," in his comment upon the stalls of Amiens, as an appeal to all creatures to praise the Lord, "dragons and all deeps, beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying fowl," repeatedly occur, while costumes ecclesiastical, military and secular, are brought into the series with accurate fidelity. The two principal arm-rests nearest to the altar are especially curious, and of these we give illustrations, though scarcely is there one compartment of the stallwork unworthy of being engraved. The first represents a squirrel in a hazel tree, and the second a dragon with open mouth, executed with remarkable spirit. A circumstance attending the latter particularly merits notice. The small "perpendicular" chapel east of the cathedral, and profusely enriched with carving, contains a fine series of poppy-heads, though of late character and much mutilated. One of these is composed of two dragons in the same posture, divided by foliage, and the animals are careful and correct fac-similes of the one we now engrave, executed above a century earlier. We know of few similar examples of workmen in the middle ages, when ingenuity and imagination were proverbially at their highest, stooping to copy any previously produced enrichments. Had this principle been prevalent, the differences of style, which arose from only a few successive years would have occasioned a host of bizarrities in the sculptures and carvings of our churches.

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